



Cooperation good for Kansas students

Parents, teachers and business leaders have all told me of the importance of first-rate schools for the success of their children, their students, and the Kansas economy. That's why I'm very happy legislators and I are moving forward together on the next step in our continued investment in our children's schools.

There is a spirit of cooperation in Topeka this year when it comes to investing in schools. That's good news for Kansas students and their parents, as well as for businesses looking for well-trained workers.

After several weeks of productive discussions between myself and legislative leaders, we're seeing school plans emerge that would ensure first-class schools for all Kansas students. This is great progress, and I commend these leaders for their willingness to work with me and with their colleagues on how we best invest in the future of Kansas.

The school investment plans being proposed would put \$500 million into our schools over the next three years. This investment would help lower class sizes, train teachers, and ensure our children are ready to enter the workforce.

I fully support these efforts, particularly because they achieve my main goal, which is to provide extra help for students who need it without cutting support for rural schools. We all realize students from low-income families need extra help if they're going to have the same opportunity to succeed, but I want to make sure that opportunity doesn't come at the expense of students in small schools.

I also want to make sure local communities are able to provide extra support to their schools if they choose. I've long been a supporter of local option budgets and the school plans we see emerging continue to give communities that option.

We're still early in the process, but if this spirit of cooperation continues – and I believe it will – I'm confident we'll take a big step forward in our continuing effort to ensure every Kansas child has the opportunity to attend a first-class school.